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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: PROPOSAL WOULD EVACUATE SOME OUTPOSTS AND LEGALIZE
OTHERS

REF: TEL AVIV 04474

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This cable has been cleared by Embassy Tel Aviv

11. (C) Summary: The Yesha Council has rejected a proposal (REFTEL A) to evacuate fifteen illegal outposts in the West Bank in exchange for "legalizing" eight others, saying it is too early for such negotiations. This proposal, from Israeli MK Otniel Schneller would also create a new settlement near Ramallah and "legalize" at least three outposts that are well inside the West Bank and far from the proposed separation barrier route. Though the Palestinian press has not made much of the proposal, it has generated considerable attention within the settler community. End Summary.

Schneller's Proposal

12. (C) According to Israeli press accounts MK Otniel Schneller outlined an agreement in which 15 outposts would be evacuated in exchange for the "legalization" of eight outposts. The outposts to be evacuated include Mitzpe Yitzhar, Hazon David, Yitzhar South, Havat Mevo Horon, Havat Hashaked, Pnei Adam, Negohot West, Asael, Yatir South, Havat Maon, Mitzpe Assaf and Migron. Those outposts to be "legalized" include Bruchin, Alonei Shilo, Elmatan, Givat Hahish, Magen Dan, Havat Yair, Mitzpe Dani, Havat Skali and Havat Ronen. (Embassy Note: it is unclear whether Schneller represents Olmert's office, and the GoI has neither confirmed nor denied that the plan is tied to Olmert's convergence/realignment plan. End Note.)

Reactions

13. (C) Emily Amrusi, spokeswoman for the Yesha Council, told poloff on November 16 that the Council does not consider Schneller as their representative and that the Council will instead negotiate directly with the GoI. She said that while the Schneller plan is interesting, the settlers are not yet willing to negotiate on specific outposts and settlements. She said the settlers are willing to see some outposts relocated to nearby areas, but they want GOI concessions first. She said the settlers will not relocate any outpost without guarantees that the GOI will provide compensation, a new location near the old outpost, and information on the disposition of the vacated area.

14. (SBU) Note and Comment: The Palestinian press has not picked up this issue, and ConGen has heard little reaction

from Palestinians. However, if the proposal is implemented, we would expect significant Palestinian reaction and an increase in tensions in the West Bank. End Note and Comment.

Break-Down of the Proposal

15. (C) A ConGen analysis of these outposts suggest that the plan would evacuate comparatively few homes, but it would legalize the residences of five times as many families. The plan would also establish a new settlement in the Shaar Binyamin Industrial area, located near the Hizma checkpoint southeast of Ramallah and on the West Bank side of the separation barrier. Of the fifteen outposts to be evacuated, two were previously evacuated and re-established, and another is a small, uninhabited building. Only three of the outposts have more than 5 families, and the total number of families in outposts to be evacuated is approximately 90. At least 59 of these families reside in outposts that will be relocated within the West Bank.

16. (C) The outposts being evacuated are primarily clustered in three areas: south of Nablus, north of Ramallah, and along the southern-most portion of the separation barrier. Most of the outposts being legalized are not clustered together, and three (one northwest of Ramallah, one west of Ramallah and one west of Nablus) are well inside the West Bank and not close to the separation barrier. Four of the outposts being legalized are clustered near Qarnei Shomron, the area where the proposed route of the separation barrier extends furthest into the West Bank, and a fifth is located in the Gush Etzion area.

17. (C) The proposal would legalize eight outposts containing

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a total of more than 147 families. Seven of the eight outposts have more than five families each. In addition to the families in the eight outposts, the Migron outpost (with 45 families) and the Givat Assaf outpost (with 14 families) would be relocated to the new settlement in the Shaar Binyamin Industrial area. Of the more than 237 families residing in the outposts covered by the proposal, 206 families reside in outposts that would be "legalized" or relocated within in the West Bank.

18. (C) Note: Under the Road Map, the GOI is obligated to dismantle all outposts constructed after March of 2001. Peace Now estimates the number of these outposts at 90. End Comment.

WALLES